

# DIVORCED: Can God Use Me?

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Leaving behind religious lies and  
confusion, Moving into truth and  
purpose!

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# How To Read This Book

**T**his book is not meant to be rushed.

It was written for people who are carrying questions, pain, or uncertainty after divorce.

Some of what is here may feel familiar.

Some of it may feel uncomfortable.

That is not a sign you are reading it wrong.

You can read this book straight through.

That is how it was written.

You can also pause.

Skip ahead.

Come back later.

If you are carrying shame or fear of rejection, the early chapters may help you name what you have been holding quietly.

If you are wrestling with whether divorce disqualified you from God, the middle chapters address Scripture, forgiveness, and standing with Him directly.

If you already believe God forgives you, but you feel stalled, hesitant, or unsure how to move forward, the later chapters and the Restoration Path were written for that exact place.

You do not need to agree with everything immediately.  
You do not need to resolve everything while reading.

Some chapters may stir grief.  
Some may bring relief.

Some may raise questions you have never allowed yourself to ask.

If a chapter feels heavy, pause.  
God is not measuring your progress by pages completed.

This book is not here to give permission to divorce.  
It is here to give permission to walk with God again.

Read honestly.  
Read slowly.  
Return when needed.

God is patient.  
You are not late.

# Chapter One

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## Did I Commit an Unpardonable Sin?

**D**id I commit an unpardonable sin? Had the church ostracized me?

Today, this was my day to be interviewed by my friend, mentor, and older brother in Jesus named Richard Mull. God had known just over a year beforehand that He wanted to continue His restoration plan for my life. This restoration process was started 24 years before in the desert of Saudi Arabia, but more on that later. At one point, I had been a full-time Christian minister and teacher for over 7 years. I had experienced many things in trusting God. God's loving-kindness, grace, mercy, power, and authority. His power and presence in action in my life and in those around me. I had been blessed to witness God's amazing provision of cars, homes, training, money, and everything else repeatedly for my family of 5 first hand! We were lead at one point to serve the Lord overseas for several years. He provided for all of that to

happen too! But this moment was not about my faith-walk with God. This was about His faithfulness to rebuild and restore a broken one of His adopted children. Divorced from a broken marriage. The broken person I am talking about who needed to be restored is me.

Like I said, I'd seen and experienced too much, and God had never let me down, but in this part of my life, I'd let Him down. That's how I felt. At a certain point, after over 7 years working my dream job, making disciples for Jesus, I had come to a place where I faced one of the biggest challenges in my personal life. I'd found myself on a road I never thought I would be on. Having made a decision I never thought I would make against myself. I had been rejecting God's forgiveness. I had been keeping myself in a place of self-judgment and punishment far beyond what God wanted for me. By doing so, I had effectively said, "Jesus, you judge everything else, but in this situation I was going to be lord and judge...". I sentenced myself to a punishment of unforgiving myself. Now It had been 6 years of punishing myself by not receiving all of God's love He held out for me.

Was God ready to forgive and restore me before this? Yes! Did God stop providing for me and blessing me even when I was keeping myself at a distance from Him? Had He been with-holding His love from me even when I was trying to stand back? No! His decision to adopt me, love me and be my good Father had never changed. He still had a plan for me in having His kingdom continue to be demonstrated in and through my life, but I was putting it on hold.

For years, I had taken myself away from the church, friends and many brothers and sisters in the Lord. I didn't want to take any chance of having to experience one of the greatest enemies of my life from even before I met my savior, **rejection**. Would the church, or ministries, or close friends and others reject me for a decision I knew I needed to make? I couldn't help feeling like divorce was an unpardonable

sin myself. Strange how there seems to be a list of things that are never spoken of but are widely known, or at least experienced, as “unpardonable sins” with an “S”, as if there are many. Even though the holy scriptures only list one “unpardonable sin” to exist from God’s perspective, and none of these unspoken ones really are that one, at least not according to God.

Have you ever felt or experienced rejection from yourself, or the church, in such an unbearable way that you put yourself into hiding? Have you ever found yourself realizing that the “hiding” was actually stunting your own growth and relationship with your Heavenly Father? Don’t stop reading if you are in hiding or may know someone who may still be hiding. I hope to share with you my true story of God’s amazing love for all His children. His love that can take you in your current situation and allow you to have, “Life more abundant”, like Jesus said He came to give us. No matter what you’ve done. No matter how many days the life you have has remaining. God wants you in His love, receiving His love. God wants to have you let His name be glorified in and through you **still!**

My unpardonable sin? I chose to get a divorce, knowing God’s displeasure with it. Are you in a prison of your own making? Have you committed some unpardonable sin? Take courage! If you are reading this book and care what God thinks, then I doubt you’ve committed the only true, unpardonable sin.

There was a time over twenty years before now when I almost got a divorce and God intervened miraculously.

# Chapter Two

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## God Intervened Part - 1

**A**fter 23 years of marriage, I decided I needed to get a divorce. However, 16 years before, there was a time when I “almost” got a divorce. Let me explain. A few years before, I considered full-time ministry as a path for the life the Lord had called me to, I had been struggling to find a way to help my marriage. Married for close to seven years, had three little ones, had been wrestling with cultural and family issues and had been trying to get help. Finally, after Seven years of marriage, trying Christian marriage counseling and anything else I could find to help our relationship, things came to a breaking point.

One day I remember speaking with our counselor on the phone and him making some suggestions to me of things to help. I remember realizing in that moment how after several years of trying everything he'd suggested to do, he was now just repeating himself. I had lost hope in what he had to offer. I had already read every book he'd suggested. I had already watched every video I was told to watch. We had even gone to suggested seminars and marriage retreats. Things were never

changing for the better. I learned a lot. The marriage would seem to improve some, but never more than for a few weeks or months. Divorce seemed like the only option. At Eight months into all the processes of getting the divorce... which included child visitation established by a judge, support, alimony, and all the NOT Fun that goes with it, its finalization was certain. That is what would have happened but God intervened!

I'd told my friends and family that the only way I could see things going differently than completing the divorce process was if God sent a message somehow and made it absolutely clear that I needed to reconcile. I always shared, "God needed to make it clear." Like send an angel, let me hear a voice from heaven, something no less than a miracle of some kind, and then BAM, something happened! A Southern Baptist pastor and friend of mine told me how God had done something incredible for his wife, a miracle!

He shared how the true and only Living God was Active and Doing something amazing in my pastor and his wife's lives. He also said that I needed to come and hear his wife's testimony! It was miraculous how I even heard that the testimony was going to occur. I was driving down an interstate and periodically I would call. I mean, I was going through a divorce, decided the divorce had to happen for various reasons, but still every once in a while I'd call this pastor friend of mine.

On this one occasion when I called this pastor friend of mine to just say hi, he was like, "It's got to be God that you're calling me right now, because I've been trying to find your phone number and I couldn't find it anywhere. And you just called, so it must be God. You must come tomorrow night and listen to my wife share her testimony about what God has done for her." I mean, that's how precise the timing of all of this was. The timing was too precise. God's timing is amazing. It's amazing that He lets us even recognize his timing in the first place.

It's really encouraging too. So, I went the following night and heard her testimony.

The God who can do miracles today just like He did in the Bible was working through people. People I knew. I'm amazed that looking through history and biographies this has always been true. People willing to do what Jesus says to do, the way He says and shows them to do things can be used powerfully by God. People willing to share what God had done in their own life were letting God use them! The pastor's wife's testimony included being set free from evil spirits! She shared that the spirits had played a part of the cause of terrible things in her life, including depression. She shared how people following Jesus' example and teachings in the Bible had helped her. These people following Jesus with His help were led to deal with the spiritual rights that these spirits had to attack her. After that they followed the example Jesus had demonstrated Himself as well as through His disciples to command the spirits to leave in Jesus' name, and how they left. The pastor's wife shared that she had received healing and freedom from depression!

As I sat and listened to what she was sharing I was thinking, "Wow, that's amazing, that's the God I read about in the Bible." I had seen and experienced many things in the Lord at this point in my walk with Jesus. It had been 11 years since I first began my walk with Him. In all that time I had never really seen and heard these kinds of things. At least not happening outside of what I had a hard time believing was valid, real, or true.

My view of God using people in this world was tainted by things I'd seen and heard of growing up. In the 80s there were crusades all over tv. In the early 90s there were mega churches and Christian conferences where people were doing strange things that mostly resembled dramatic shows. I saw very few people I'd say would come close to

demonstrating what I'd call a "humble disciples of Jesus". There were ministries known to have people "pretend" to be healed or set free of "evil spirits". There were fake miracles and signs and wonders. All those things had an impact on what I believed God was doing through people. I never knew anyone I really trusted or found credible in regard to supernatural things. At least not until hearing my pastor's wife. I always wanted to believe that Jesus still did what He said He would do with and through His disciples. Like Jesus said people who really wanted to follow Him would do. Ever since the first time I started to read the Bible after being born-again I had a growing desire. A desire to see and hear in real life the things Jesus said anyone who follows Him should expect to be seeing and hearing. I got born again in Saudi Arabia in the First Gulf War while serving in the US Army as a parachute infantryman.

# Chapter Three

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## How God Saved Me During the First Gulf War

When I got born again, I was kind of anti-religion and anti-church, because none of those things seemed to ever help anyone I knew. From what I saw in the lives of my religious friends, church and stuff like that never seemed to really be any help. It was never a positive thing in their lives. It was like they “had” to go to church on Sundays. They would tell me about what they did Saturday night, getting drunk and everything else leading up to being at church with a hangover or worse. So, none of that religious stuff appealed to me. I believed in God, and the trinity but had never known that He wanted to know me. Not like a relationship with the real God kind of thing, not really.

Shortly after I got born again in the Gulf War, one chaplain told me it was a relationship that I’d just begun. Now God’s my Father in heaven, Jesus my savior and Lord, and His Holy Spirit was in me to

make it all real and help me. Another chaplain encouraged me and helped me learn how to study the Bible and share about Jesus with others too. He also said, “You’re just getting to know Jesus and, just like with any real relationship, you need to spend time with someone if you want to really want to get to know them. With God you pray, you talk to Him and learn how to listen to Him, and you read the Bible. Reading the Bible is also part of spending time with Him too. Talk to Him, ask questions, learn to hear His answers, and find them in His word, the Bible, and in life too. Apply what He teaches you in your life as He helps you understand it and you will grow.”

I took what these chaplains shared with me and did exactly what they said to do. There I was in a foreign country, you know, it was a war, but for me it also was as if I was being given a seven-month Christian retreat with God! In the military there is a saying to describe all the extra time that you have because you were waiting around in long lines very often, “Hurry up and wait!”. So, I had a lot of time to read the Bible and to study what God was saying, thanks to handy little pocket Bibles.

Sometimes I would write questions down in the pages of the Bible when they came up and keep reading. It amazed me how a lot of times God would answer the questions that I wrote on one page here, on another page somewhere else in His word. That’s how I got to know the Lord. When reading the Bible I saw Jesus healing people and dealing with evil spirits. I saw Jesus teaching his disciples to do the same things and teach others to do all those things too. Whenever I was reading through the Bible, if I could put what I was learning into practice or test what was being said in real life, I tried to do just that. The more I tried, the more I found out and could see for myself how true what God says really is!

There was stuff I didn't put into practice while I was still in the Gulf War too, like taking authority over evil spirits and trying to heal the sick. In part because I didn't have the opportunity and because I didn't have an understanding. The more I read the Bible in the old and new testaments, the more God was giving me wisdom along the way too. There was one time where somebody said, "The KJV is the only real translation of the Bible you should rely on." Just like Jesus said, the Holy Spirit will give you what to say when you need it... He gave me wisdom in that moment.

Shortly before this happened, I had read Jesus telling me in the Bible about how the Holy Spirit was going to come and be with me. Anyone who becomes His disciple. The Spirit of Truth, to be a counselor and that He was going to guide me into all truth. He would even bring back what Jesus teaches to my memory when I need it too. I looked at this guy sharing his belief about Bible translations and I said, "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?"

He exclaimed, "Amen, Yes I do, Praise the Lord! I believe in the Holy Spirit."

I said, "You believe He's the Spirit of Truth?"

The guy said, "Amen."

I continued, "Believe He's going to guide you and lead you into all truth?"

The guy replied, "Yes, praise the Lord."

Then I said, "Well, if it's the KJV, or the NIV, or the TV Guide, if there's truth in it, I expect Him to lead me."

They stopped after that. And it's always been true. Holy Spirit does just as Jesus said He would. I know God can teach me from a TV show or a song on the radio or taking a walk outside. I'm not saying God's Word is not powerful and important, or that some translations are better than others, But God can speak in all kinds of different ways.

Just think about it, I mean...He's God! This is all part of how He led me. Let's continue with what happened when I went to hear my pastor's wife sharing.

# Chapter Four

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## God Intervened Part - 2

**H**ere's what happened when I went to hear my pastor's wife's testimony.

When I heard her testimony, I was really encouraged because finally someone was talking about the guy that I read about, the real Jesus! The one I believe in, but not like a show. This wasn't some con artist. It seemed like Holy Spirit was in me and confirming to me on the inside that, "Yes, this is real testimony of My work in her life."

As a result of her testimony, I decided to go to the teaching that just happened to be available and start the next evening at the ministry she'd received help! The testimony had been on Wednesday night. At the last part of her sharing, the pastor's wife had said that there was training like what she'd been to that God had used to help her, starting the next evening. Teaching and training to learn about some spiritual truths, how the real spiritual war the Bible teaches about works in this world still today, in people's lives around us, and in our own lives too. There was also teaching about dealing with many things, including

authority in the name of Jesus, breaking curses and commanding evil spirits, and so much more. All being done with wisdom, the way Jesus taught his disciples to do in His name. This training was starting the following Thursday and Friday evenings and Saturday morning! God's timing again was incredible! So, I went through the training and even received some prayer ministry, too. When God brought me through that process, I couldn't help thinking that maybe this was a key problem with my marriage. The one I was in the eighth month of the divorce process to dissolve!

I was always looking for the problem with my marriage and how I could fix it? Maybe this is it, maybe it's all spiritual warfare, it's not her, it's not me, it's the spirits, it's all of this, we just need authority in Jesus' name and now I can fix the marriage. I always wanted to do the best I could with what I understand, and this was an entire area of life I'd never understood and never could have applied to my marriage. So, we didn't get divorced; we reconciled.

After that reconciliation, I went through ministry training to teach and minister like I'd received at that three-day conference. I felt a calling to earn a master's degree too, and become a Clinically Licensed Pastoral Counselor, board certified in marriage and family counseling through the National Christian Counselors Association (NCCA). During which I also got more involved in ministry too.

It was also during this time of life when I became close friends with Richard Mull, my interviewer who I mentioned earlier. He and I went around ministering to pastors and whenever he had an opportunity, if I was available, I would try to go with him. We did a lot and learned a lot too. Our stories of how Jesus was discipling us intertwined for a while in many ways. God used Richard's testimony of how He'd taken care of Rich and his family for years as they lived by faith, trusting God to provide for them as he did what the Lord directed him to do.

God was using Rich's testimony to encourage me to trust our Father in heaven more too!

I almost had been divorced but then reconciled instead. Growing in a corporate job as a programmer analyst, also working on the Masters Degree, also ministering with Richard whenever I was available. It was during this time when Jesus made it clear that He was calling me into full-time ministry.

# Chapter Five

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## Stepping Out of the Boat With Jesus

**W**hen Jesus called me into full-time ministry, I was working hard at climbing the corporate ladder. I'd been ministering with Richard Mull whenever I could. Going to prayer meetings and helping how I could with the skills I had been blessed with. Programming, video production, audio editing and anything else needed that I could help. There was a moment I call a "White knuckle" moment while I was building my ministry skills and counseling where I knew Jesus was calling me to trust Him more, even to trust Him with my career too.

I had a schedule where I'd get up in the morning, be at work by 5am, study for the M.A. for an hour, then work from 6am-3pm. Work was a 1hr45min drive each way. I had heard Richard's testimonies of many amazing ways God had provided for him and his family. It really was amazing! Like reading about some wild things God did with

missionaries and stuff, but this was my friend, and I knew him, and I knew God. I felt God telling me it was time to take another step deeper with Him. It was like Jesus was standing on the water and I was on the outside edge of the boat, with one hand on the railing.

One foot over the water, one hand, “White Knuckling” on the handrail, looking at Jesus saying, “I’m coming Lord, I know I can trust You. I’ll be right there, in a minute.” I’d read “Encountering God”, so many years before any of this, and had seen God do amazing things in my life, but this was different. This was God calling me to another level of trusting Him. This time with my career. Richard’s testimony of God’s faithfulness in providing for his family was only one piece of many that God was now highlighting to help encourage me to step off of the boat on to the water with Jesus.

Shortly before I finally took a step of faith out on to the water, I found myself in a dilemma at work. I would be working on programming and after a while I was needing to take caffeine pills to give me a boost to get through my days. I was working on my M.A., counseling, and ministering when possible as well. I was shocked at how whenever I was working and looking at the computer screen, I felt like I was plugged into the computer and my energy was flowing into that work. I’d take a caffeine pill to keep going and give me a boost. When I would get phone calls about ministry, I’d be instantly fully awake, paying attention and ready for God to use me however He needed. As soon as I would hang-up the phone the energy was sapped away again. It felt as if when I was programming I was plugged into the computer and it was drawing power from me. But when I was ministering, I was plugged into God by the Holy Spirit, and I was drawing power from Him! This went on for weeks, and then something crazy happened.

I was performing my normal routine. Get up early, go to work, study, work, caffeine, work, be energized on a call, get back to work,

need another caffeine pill... and on and on. Well, this one day I realized I'd taken 3 caffeine pills to make it through the day. I shared with my wife at the time what had happened and how I really felt like God wanted me to step out into full-time ministry; she said, well then go ahead if you really believe it's what God wants you to do. So, I wrote a letter and turned in my 2-week notice that next morning.

I was finally stepping off the boat all the way! Maybe I'll write a book one day and try to list all the amazing and miraculous things God's done over the years as encouragement to someone who may need it. You see, God loves all of us the same. On more than one occasion, the only thing I needed to take another step and trust God has been a testimony of how God helped someone else. If you know that God's calling you to do something or take some action but you're not quite ready to take the step, pray that He gives you what you need to take that step. He's the true living God. He's smart enough to figure out a way to speak to you in a way you'll know it is "His" direction and encouragement. Ask, knock and seek. God used Richard's walk of faith to encourage me about provision for sure.

To be encouraged by Richard's own amazing story of God's answer to a Southern Baptist minister's prayer of, "Lord Disciple Me...", I suggest you get a copy of his book, "The Jesus Training Manual", from Amazon or Audible. I know people whose faith has been being rekindled and re-ignited by the Lord as they read that book! Now back to this story....

I ended up working with Richard for his ministry, Operation Light Force, for about 2 years. Then God showed me another step He had for me to continue to grow in His way for my life. I'd gone and heard Peter and Fiona Horrobin, of Ellet Ministries, teaching at a church in Valrico, Florida. After one teaching, it was made clear to me I was being called to go and learn from one of their ministry's schools in the

UK for several months. There was an interesting catch, the training started in two weeks, and I had a family of five and no money to make things happen.

Two weeks? I didn't know how to put all that together, but I was like, "Okay, if we're going to be leaving the US in two weeks, what can we do? We don't have money, so we can't buy plane tickets, but what can we do to get ready if we were going to go?" And we did those things, and God provided the money, provided the plane tickets, the passports, and in two weeks we were in the UK! God is so awesome and I've seen God do plenty. I thought God was going to train me and send me back to continue with Richard in Operation Light Force, but God's plans don't always work the way we think. Instead, I ended up working with Ellel Ministries from 2004 until 2011, in the UK until 2005, and then in Florida in the US.

It would not be surprising if you may have a thought as you've been reading like, "All of this sounds great. How did you ever get to a place of considering divorce after all of this?" Please read on.

# Chapter Six

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## What Happened to the Marriage God Saved? Part - 1

**T**o recap, I almost got a divorce. God stepped in and we stopped the divorce. God led me to learn about spiritual warfare and learning to do more of what I read about Jesus' disciples doing. This was an injection of hope in me to still try to save my marriage. I stepped away from a growing career in corporate America and into full time Christian ministry. In ministry I was teaching and ministering and doing many other things as needed along the way. We'd been living by faith for years. God provided more than all we needed, cars, food, housing, travel and much more. At this point I'd been in ministry and helped many people in many different ways. Including helping some to gain healing and also to help others to have freedom from the

enemy of God. Still others to build up and help grow in their own life journey as fellow disciples of Jesus. But what about my marriage? Did understanding, applying spiritual warfare principals, and authority in Jesus' name to break strongholds and curses and much more help? Yes, and no. For the things that could be helped, yes, for the things that could not, no. Not all things that come against marriages are controllable.

Many times, when I've shared my experience in the healing and deliverance ministry, I've heard people say things like, "You don't think there's a demon under every rock do you?". This happens normally because a person has had bad experiences with other people that say they deal with evil spirits. Often, this also shows a person may have a lack of training along these lines. This is curious since Jesus calls his disciples, followers, to make disciples the way He did. Make more of His disciples, loving one another the way that He loves us.

Let me say it this way: if Jesus taught His disciples, His followers, to deal with evil spirits, but your training doesn't have any of that included, then whose disciples are you being trained to be? And if you are making disciples for Jesus and you're leaving out training that Jesus taught, then wouldn't you want to make adjustments. Wouldn't you want your teaching to be more like Jesus and His ways when you realize what you teach is different from Jesus' teaching? Of course, Jesus taught much more to His disciples than about using the authority He gives us in His name to command evil spirits.

I use it as an obvious example of something not being taught by many current so-called leaders in the body of Christ. They teach and are only following in part at best. They may be in danger of becoming modern day examples of the blind leading the blind. It's like feeding the body of Christ imitation milk while expecting them to be healthy and then wondering why the world doesn't see Jesus. Perhaps this

is an example of what the apostle Paul warns Timothy, teachers and so-called believers to stay away from, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”, found in 2Timothy 3:5 (KJV).

From others with more experience than myself, I’ve heard, and agree, that the biggest problem in the Christian world is not evil spirits. It’s a lack of real discipleship and making real disciples of Jesus so that God’s truth can be learned and applied in people’s lives. If all the problems people had were just evil spirits or demons, then the answer would be simple and fast. Take authority over the evil spirits, deal with their spiritual permission to be affecting a person’s life, and cast them out!

So, after many years in ministry, learning to apply God’s truths in my life and helping others to do the same, what happened to my marriage? Couldn’t I just kick out all the evil spirits and tah-dah, all things are new? No. Did I wish it was that simple, of course.

Marriage takes two. In all this time and growth, I was still trying to work on my marriage, too.

There I was in Christian ministry. M.A. degree and credentials as a Pastoral Counselor board certified in Marriage and Family Counseling. I decided to focus on working in ministry rather than starting a counseling practice. I’d learned many things along the way, but still needed help with deep things in my marital relationship. Things that were not just spiritual, not just easy to kick out, not just outside stuff.

Also there were other things that hurt me from deep on the inside. These things were deeply rooted beliefs. They affected my relationship with my wife and even our children. Beliefs that had actually come from my 1st step father. He had only been my step father for three years, but it still left a mark within my hurt-little-soul. He was known for being several things which he proudly wore as titles, a “red-neck

Indian”, an “iron-worker”, and a drunk. Like everyone, he had good and bad days.

Like every drunk, the people who loved him would develop ways to survive. These survival strategies work when you are in a relationship with someone who’s an addict of some kind. The problem is that what you may call “normal” in that kind of relationship is not “normal” or “healthy” in any other relationships. What is worse is that you don’t know that you have these issues that you are bringing into your relationships that are unhealthy. You also don’t realize that these behaviors are not “normal”. At least not until you have no choice but to face them, and that’s if you are lucky. Otherwise, those unhealthy things just persist and always work at destroying or maintaining damage in your relationships.

Ultimately, those unhealthy ways to protect yourself, ways you don’t realize exist, continue hurting you and the ones you love too. Could there be spirits involved in these things? Sure, and there probably demons too, BUT, there is often a lot of training and beliefs that have become entrenched in each person too. Wrong Beliefs are like things a person thinks are true, which are actually lies. Beliefs can’t just be cast out of a person. Also, a person can’t even begin to work on things that need to be worked on when they don’t know those things exist or what they are. Recognition that I had something still needing work and a big desire to get healthy kept pushing me forward to keep seeking.

I knew I still needed help with my marriage, but wasn’t sure what to do. And then I was at the place of, okay, something needed to happen. I went to a pastor’s retreat in Scotland.

# Chapter Seven

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## A Pastor's Retreat in Scotland

**G**od used this retreat to show me a root cause of my unhealthy marriage.

Probably about a year before writing the book, “God’s Adopted”, God started working on me when I had gone to a Christian retreat for pastors in Scotland.

Before leaving for the UK from the US, I had started reading a book, “Codependent No More”. In my room at the retreat I got to the point of this book where it lists out something it called the “12 steps”. It turns out that they were the same that Alcoholics Anonymous, AA, uses. As I read the first 3 of the steps the Lord came to help me as a wall, my wall, of denial began to be unveiled to me.

Here are the first 3 steps. Imagine that as I’m reading each one, I’m absolutely seeing myself amid them and kind of seeing the truth in each one for myself in my life. I’ll share each of these first three steps and include how I was applying each to myself..

Picture this: if you can, I'm sitting down at a little desk, reading, becoming overwhelmed with emotions, crying like a baby, needing a towel to help with the blubbering and mucus....

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable. ---> became “Heavenly Father, I admit that I'm powerless and unable to save my marriage and that I'd tried all I could and didn't know what to do....”

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.. ---> became “I know You can do all things, please help me with this Lord.”

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.. ---> became “Jesus, You are Savior, not me, I cannot save this and I've tried, I lift the marriage and myself and the future and whatever it means or needs to mean or become and put it all in Your hands.”

I was crying like a little baby with snot dripping down. It was like the Lord was showing me all the years I had been trying to be the “savior” of my marriage. He's savior, I'm not the savior. He can be savior, but I can't be savior. I had to say, “Okay, Lord, uncle, You be Lord over this.” He was beginning to help me understand how I'd been trying to be lord and trying to control things in my relationships that were not mine to control.

I had tried everything I could think of to save the marriage. Becoming a counselor and earning a master's degree and all the training that went with them. All of that was great, but it didn't save the marriage. Shortly after the trip to Scotland I decided it was wise to step away from being in leadership in ministry so that I could let myself be able to make any decisions I needed to make without hurting the ministry I believed in or anyone who served with me in it either.

I say all of that because that's all part of what the Lord was doing in my life when I wrote "God's Adopted". In "God's Adopted", I share little nuggets of what God was doing in me at that time and through that process. There was a year that He had me go to a 12-step program as an adult child of an alcoholic. There's something called Al-Anon for the families of alcoholics. My first stepfather was an alcoholic. I knew he loved me, but his brokenness broke me in some ways I couldn't know or understand as a child.

He had only been my stepdad for three years, but that affected me quite a bit. It twisted my internal road-map to what a relationship was supposed to be like. I'd been impacted in ways I didn't understand. Now that my eyes were being opened I could see some of those unhealthy habits more clearly. Unhealthy ways of handling situations or responding to others. I was starting to see them being reflected in my kids and in my marriage too. So, I started working on all that I could by applying what good counseling was directing me as I understood how. Also I was allowing my beliefs to get worked on too. By putting myself under safe teaching and experience that helped me test what good vs bad beliefs were in regard to relationships. It was the help I felt God's peace about receiving through the avenues I had found. Some help from God through a counselor who'd specialized in adult children of alcoholics. Some other help from God through Al-Anon.

In the 12 steps I went through in Al-Anon, God showed me how He loved people way beyond my religion. Way beyond what I understood from what I'd learned in ministry and in the Bible. He wasn't a different God. He's the same God. He was showing me how He loves people far beyond my understanding. His love for them was there even though in that moment of their lives they might think or want to say that a chair was their God. He was showing me a deeper level of His love for those people. His truths and gospel didn't change or anything.

He still died for everyone. Even if they didn't believe in Him or know Him.

I knew that my marriage relationship was a broken thing. The 12-steps helped me come to reality on things that I just hadn't been recognizing. It really put me in a position of, I need to be real about this. I need to be real with myself. Now I had to start taking more steps toward a healthy reality, even if it hurt. In truth, it was affecting my family, but I couldn't see it.

How was it hurting my family and why couldn't I see it or do anything about it? Let me elaborate that in the next chapter.

# Chapter Eight

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## What Happened to the Marriage God Saved? Part - 2

**F**or years, I was praying and believing and hoping that God was going to swoop in and save the marriage. I'd hoped God would just wipe away any issues that were affecting the kids because of this unhealthy mom and dad relationship. I had hoped that God was going to rescue the kids and take anything bad right out of them. He didn't do any of that. It did not happen that way. Some results seem obvious. None of the kids really believe in marriage, at least not with the God their parents seemed to talk about, teach about, and say they trusted.

I don't blame them at all, though; it makes sense when I consider the reality which I hadn't been seeing. It's not that I was ignoring

what was happening. That would have been negligent, I didn't see it. I couldn't.

It's really painful. I was in more denial than I realized. My encounter with God in Scotland was not going to waste. I started searching for more understanding of co-dependency, which ultimately led me to find someone who specialized in helping adult children of alcoholics. A name used to describe a large group of people with similar issues from childhoods damaged by alcoholic parents. After more research, I found help on a website by a specialist who helped these wounded souls and eventually even contacted this person. I saw this therapist a few times, this older woman who specialized in adult children of alcoholics and the issues they had. To say that these therapy sessions, online video calls, were interesting would be an understatement.

She read me like a book even though we'd never met before, "This is what's going on and why and how you became to act and react the way you do." "Wow!". I was shocked. Most of the issues had to do with the impact my first step-father had on me. Perhaps you may not know this. When you're raised by alcoholics or anyone who has addictions, you develop certain ways to deal with situations that you don't realize you are developing. For example to survive and try to stay safe you learn to ask and respond to questions in ways that you think will make the outcomes and responses be what you need them to be. It's unhealthy, but you don't know it's unhealthy. For you, it's normal. When you grow up, inevitably, that "normal" way to have relationships is all you got. It's really not normal, and it's not healthy. But you don't know that.

It attracts other people that have those kinds of issues, or people who can perpetuate your unhealthy issues. Those kinds of people, or at least their issues, attract your issues and vice versa and then you have

a match! Can God use such a match? Yes! Is it always going to go the way you think it might? No. Can God still be glorified, work out His plan, mold and shape and create parents and children out of all these kinds of things? Of course! He's God! But that still doesn't mean the marriage can last.

It's amazing how that works. Two people trying to have a healthy relationship based on a belief system that they don't know they have that is actually unhealthy. There's no way unless you have outside help to correct that. So, I started getting help with everything. I started to deal with and relate with the kids differently. I also started to try to deal with the marriage relationship differently, too.

Part of getting healthy is learning to recognize what is unhealthy so that you can actually begin choosing the ways you want to act and react in relationships. Otherwise you just continue on auto-pilot with the unhealthy ways developed in your past. The last thing I ever wanted in marriage was divorce. Because my own parents had divorced and I didn't want this generational divorce kind of thing to continue through me if I could help it. I wanted to believe that we could just break that curse in Jesus' name. It wasn't going to happen. There I was in a time and place where it was as if I were standing in a room looking around thinking, oh no, now what?

This will never change. There's nothing I can do about this. I mean, there are things about this unhealthy relationship that need to change which are actually out of my hands. Things I myself can't change. The only thing I could change is whether I remained in this unchangeable place. And when it got to that place of hopelessness, that's when I ended up saying, OK, I need to get a divorce. But I didn't want to ever do that. I never really had a plan for this direction I never thought I'd ever even consider. Have you ever found yourself in a place where you were making a decision that you never thought you would, or breaking

a commitment or a covenant or a vow that you never thought you would?

Divorce is up there on my list of things that I never wanted to do or consider. Thank God for His word and the true and real examples He's given in it for us. I can say that I'd never deny Jesus, can you? I would hope so, but sometimes we cannot know what we'll do or not do unless we're in that moment needing to make a choice. There are at least 12 people I can think of who denied Christ who swore, to Jesus in person, they would die before doing that. You may know them too if you've read a Gospel, but let me encourage you with this a little deeper for a healthy result.

# Chapter Nine

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## Hope From Unspeakable Decisions

I love scripture. It even has examples of people doing things that they never thought or imagined they would ever do. Just like I had found myself in a place where I had made a decision I never dreamed I would make. Looking down a path that I never thought I would ever have my feet on in the first place. I take some comfort when I think of the disciples with Jesus, how they each made a vow to die with Him before denying Him... but then they did. I'm comforted in their humanity, and in knowing I'm human, and limited like they were, and still loved by my Lord as they were too.

In the past I always used to recall how Peter made that vow to Jesus and then denied Him 3 times before the rooster crowed. Re-reading the passage shows clearly that ALL the disciples made the same vow. How they said, even if I have to die, I'll never deny you. It's worth reading here if you haven't seen the words in a while. After Jesus tells

Peter how Peter will deny him three times before the rooster crows we see this verse, Matthew 26:35 (NHEB) “Peter said to him, ‘Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.’ **All of the disciples also said likewise..**” (highlighting added)

Right after Peter says what he did, it says, “**All of the disciples also said likewise.**” In other words, every disciple there declared on their life that they would not deny Jesus. But they did deny Him. Every one of them. I think it is very healthy to consider that we are all limited human beings. We don’t always know our own limitations. We can make commitments the best that we can, even take vows, but we still don’t know our own limits.

I absolutely believe that Peter and the rest of the disciples were sincere when they said that they’d die with Jesus before denying Him. I do not think that any of those disciples were lying. But every one of them still denied Him. I believe God knows our limits even though we ourselves do not. He knows what we’ll be able to do, or not do, even though there are times we do not know ourselves. This encourages me.

I get some peace from that because I’m just a human myself too. My marriage is not the same as my relationship with Jesus. But they have some similarity in this: I never want to disown my Jesus, and I wanted nothing to do with having or needing a divorce either.

But that is exactly where I found myself. I could not change anything or do anything more to help my unhealthy marriage. I’d tried for many, many years. So, what about divorce is so difficult? What makes it a decision that is often viewed as being taboo, or wrong? Where do people learn to look down upon, or judge people who have been divorced? Why do people even look down upon themselves if they were divorced by someone or especially if they were the one in the marriage that chose to get the divorce?

Let's go down two roads on this hoping to consider the people divorce really affects the most. People whom Jesus died for and who our Father in Heaven loves dearly. People whom Jesus still calls us to love in the same way that He loves.

# Chapter Ten

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## The “D” Word: Divorce, the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly?

There are many aspects to divorce. Some of the most powerful decisions people make on how they treat themselves and others in regard to divorce ultimately comes from their beliefs.

I want to take a little time in the next two chapters to try and shine a light on our thoughts, beliefs, and what God says about divorce and marriage. As I studied and prepared for writing this book I found that some of what I'd thought about divorce and God's views were actually wrong.

I hope to shed light on some of the more significant beliefs that ultimately are used by people to judge others and themselves in ways that God never intended. I know I had held myself at a distance from

God at least in part because of mine. Please test what I share about these things. Give yourself permission to consider your beliefs about divorce.

I hope to share God's truth about divorce in love, while also not ignoring some of the great reality of concerns, issues, and views about divorce too. What are some Biblical views on divorce, marriage, and re-marriage?

It amazes me how often as I'm getting older that I'm seeing things in scripture I had not seen before. Or sometimes worse, things I think I must have forgotten. Also, I'm finding out there are things I've been remembering inaccurately, or making assumptions about in error!

For some interesting introspection, you might answer some of these questions on a piece of paper before reading the rest of this chapter to compare notes with me. I've included the answers I had with honest reflection before writing this book in italics and parentheses... ( with humility, I admit that my answers were not always correct either.)

Here are 8 questions to read and stir up your current thoughts before seeing my own original answers shared below. In the next chapter I'll dig in a little more before continuing my story so you may see how God has helped me grow through this. Maybe some of that same help from Him can help you too, if you need any.

1. What did Jesus say about marriage?
2. What did Jesus say about divorce?
3. What is marriage and what happens to the marriage after this life on Earth is over?
4. Is there marriage in heaven?
5. Is Divorce a sin?
6. What is in the Law of Moses about divorce?
7. Could some aspects of divorce be considered a sin?
8. How about Remarriage?

Questions in bold (*My original answers are in italics and parenthesis.*)

1. What did Jesus say about marriage? (*let no man put asunder what God has joined together. A man and a woman marry and become one flesh.*)

2. What did Jesus say about divorce? (*God hates divorce*)

3. What is marriage and what happens to the marriage after this life on Earth is over? (*Marriage ends after either spouse dies. Jesus mentions that no one is married in heaven when he's asked who's wife would a woman be who married several times and then dies.*)

4. Is there marriage in heaven? If you were married on earth, are you married in heaven? (*No, based on my previous answer.*)

5. Is Divorce a sin? (*I "felt" like it was, but also knew that it was made available in the OT law too. So I'm perplexed. Jesus says how it's permitted for a man to get a divorce, but he also says that it was only because of man having hard hearts that Moses allowed for it. So, strictly speaking, it must not be a sin if it's permitted by the Law, right?*)

6. What is in the Law of Moses about divorce? (*Steps on how to divorce a woman.*)

7. Could some aspects of divorce be considered a sin? (*Jesus mentions to not take any vow and let your yes be yes and no be no...so perhaps taking and breaking the marriage "vow" may be. Also in the NT, it states that if a man thinks something to be a sin, then for him it is. I think this means that even if God would not call something a "sin" that the individual may still treat others and themselves as if it were anyway.*)

8. How about Remarriage? (*It is permitted if the single person's original spouse died, or if an unbelieving spouse leaves or divorces you. Otherwise, it may be considered adultery. Curious in Ezra 10:44, we*

*see Israelites deciding to get divorced from their foreign wives, but God didn't stop it.)*

How do your answers compare to mine? Just to restate, not all of my answers above in italics are correct. Also, looking back in time I can say that not knowing what the Bible actually teaches regarding divorce caused me to stay in my unhealthy marriage for several extra years. Then after the divorce my lack of understanding became fuel to judge myself instead of drawing nearer to God. But think about this, how much time and effort is the "correct" amount that must be taken to try to save any marriage? Keep in mind that no-one can live our lives for us. This means that we all have to decide on these things for ourselves. This is especially true for this subject. How much time living in a state of "unhealthy", or time spent "trying to fix the marriage" is too little, or too much? When is it OK to say, "UNCLE!"

These are difficult things to consider. Not as simple as many people would like to make it. But very worthy to continue digging into so that truth in love may be able to shed light on this dark area of understanding. To examine beliefs honestly, we have to start where the Bible actually speaks plainly about divorce.

# Chapter Eleven

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## Divorce in the Bible?

**H**ave you ever read in the Bible where divorce is explained? I thought I had and then, Boom! Here it is.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 1(NHEB) 1When a man takes a wife, and marries her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorce, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2When she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3If the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorce, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; 4her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and you shall not cause the land to sin, which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.

Here are some more verses I've been taking into consideration. I hope that many of the answers to the questions from the previous chapter can be gleaned as you continue reading.

Deuteronomy 23:22-24(NHEB) 21When you shall vow a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not be slack to pay it: for the LORD your God will surely require it of you; and it would be sin in you. 22But if you shall forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in you. 23That which is gone out of your lips you shall observe and do; according as you have vowed to the LORD your God, a freewill offering, which you have promised with your mouth.

Here's a verse I originally thought maybe Jesus had referenced. This verse had also been a key verse in my beliefs about divorce for many years too.

Malachi 2:16(NHEB) "... 16 For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with violence." says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.

My understanding about that passage in Malachi was challenged and expanded in recent years. While researching for this book I allowed myself to consider more context and also another fact I recently learned that I'll mention later.

1st let's try some context starting with verse 13 and then we'll even look at a key component of meaning that was based on a mis-translation over time which can be clearly seen.

Malachi 2:13-16(NHEB) 13This again you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with sighing, because he doesn't regard the offering any more, neither receives it with good will at your hand. 14Yet you say, 'Why?' Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion, and the wife of your covenant. 15Did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? Why one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his

youth. 16For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with violence." says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.

I've always thought that the Bible was simple and clear on God's thinking about divorce. He hates it, right? (Mal 2:16). Diving deeper into this passage in context I see how it turns out that it wasn't that God "hated divorce". In context the men were using marriage and divorce in ways that ultimately were sinful. They were mistreating what God had meant for good, marriage and also wrongfully taking advantage of divorce too. God established marriage. Based on Jesus' explanation about divorce I think we can at the very least say that God allowed Moses to include divorce in God's law.

If God simply "hated divorce" the way I'd always played those words in my mind then why didn't He remove it from His law? Why do we read on more than one occasion in the Bible how divorce was even used as a way for God's people in some instances to return to God? Here are a few of them if you haven't seen them, Ezra 9-10, also in Nehemiah 13. In these instances there were mass divorces required to get God's people away from pagan gods and customs. Am I justifying divorce? No. I'm saying that there was far more to understanding it and God's perspective of it than I'd allowed myself to consider.

In Ezra and Nehemiah the people had married and were straying away from God. In Malachi God's people were marrying and divorcing to take advantage of relationships with women. Verse 16 where it is translated to say "...For I hate divorce," says the Lord, God of Israel" seemed to me like it would be sound doctrine to teach people that "God hates divorce". I firmly believed this for many years and quoted it more than once. I never wanted divorce to be a choice I could make. So, I used this verse with its wording to act like a firm wall to stop me. For myself I couldn't help but to believe that if I ever chose divorce,

and the Bible says that "God hates divorce.", then God would hate me if I ever chose divorce. In my research I found out that it turns out that "God hating divorce" was a result of a poor translated verse.

I've included a profound chart at the end of this book that you may find interesting. This chart shows how through time the answer to the questions about Mal 2:16 - Who? Hates What, or whom? Had been changed over the years in many Bible translations. To simplify what it shows I can say that the earliest translations established that the husband was showing hate towards his wife, which is what De 24 says he must do to justify divorce. Beginning in 1611 the King James translation shows a change of view on this where it's wording insights God as hating divorce. Later beginning in 2003 Bible translators began to correct this verses intentions back to how it had been before it shifted in 1611. If you have some Bibles that are older than 2003 you can take a look and compare the verses and see for yourself "who" is "hating", "what" or "who".

It's not hard to see how such a slight change could have great ramifications over the years. Would it be easier to control people if the passage was sharing history of how people were using a law to their own advantage, or to say the God hates something? Ultimately Malachi 2 shows how God was displeased with people practicing religion for their own wrong intentions.

What about marriage in heaven? In the New Testament, Jesus is clear when He says that whomever God has joined together, let no one separate. He further explains how the two who were married had become one flesh. Jesus is challenged at one point concerning the law regarding a man to marry the wife of a fallen brother to bear children who could carry on the brother's line. Jesus was asked who's wife will she be in heaven if she'd been with each of the 7 brothers, according to the law, and had no children still. In this instance, Jesus ultimately

explains how in Heaven men and women are not married or given in marriage any longer (Mt 22:27-30).

Remarriage, but in truth even marriage without it being a sin, or committing adultery when applying biblical truths can be a little tricky. These are ways the Bible lists in which a previously married person can re-marry without committing sin, without blame and without being in an adulterous affair. Their marriage had to be dissolved because their spouse committed adultery, or their spouse died, or they were married to a non-believer who's left or divorced them. Also important is that the 2nd person of the new marriage must also have either never been married or become free from their prior marriage in a way that left them able to re-marry without sin too.

Why does all of this matter so much? Because DIVORCE is so highly regarded as taboo. Most people think that a proper marriage is when two people who marry who have never been married. Biblically we know how that is a good thing, but there is a lot more to it than that. Let's be even more clear though in case it's been missed. If there's been any sexual engagement in either of the couple's lives before getting married to one another, then they've already committed the sin of fornication and possibly even adultery beforehand.

Does it almost seem like, according to the Bible, almost everyone has committed adultery of some kind or another at some point or another? Well, have you or your spouse, if you're married, ever looked with lust at a married person? On TV? In a movie? Do you think it makes any difference with God whether or not a person knew if someone was married at the time of the imagination of being together wrongly?

After reading some of these ways that a marriage can be tainted I think it's easy to agree that we all have sinned at some point, which was definitely a point Jesus was making. It could have been in our own

past decisions, or our ex's, or our current spouse's, or even any of our imaginations....

So, What if you work out that your current marriage is possibly in a sinful state, or adulterous affair based on the Bible's teachings? There is good news! Like all other sins, your actions and mine are the same if we want to be in right standing with God. Repent, confess, and receive forgiveness. After that, please go on with God.

Does any of this make divorce any less impactful on the lives it affects? No, but it can certainly help anyone who wants to have God's grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness. I have found God working some more healing in me as I've researched and grown from writing this book. Especially in areas that were affected by divorce.

I'm not making light of divorce. I am, however, trying to echo the fact that we all have sinned and will sin again 1Jn 1:8. I cannot help but to think of the verse shared by the apostle Paul in Romans 7:24-25a (NHEB) 24 What a wretched man I am. Who will deliver me out of the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

If we all sin, and decisions surrounding divorce and re-marriage are sometimes sin, why is divorce considered "sin"? More to think about is how divorce is often considered a "bigger" sin than other sins, even though "divorce" itself is not the sin? Let's dive into this next.

# Chapter Twelve

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## How Never Speaking About Divorce Could Become a Trap

**W**hen I was first married, I believed that I'd never get a divorce. I'd come from a family with several divorces. I was determined that, because I was a born-again believer in God, I could break that curse – I could control any situation that might tempt me toward that decision.

I was wrong.

After trying for many years, a very long time, to do everything I could to save my marriage, I encountered something that was worse than even considering divorce.

What could be worse than divorce you may ask? Let me share at least one thing that can kill hope of saving a marriage, even the hope

of someone who seems to have too much hope about too many things. Even someone willing to try almost anything, education, studying, hard work, helping others, and trying to help their own family too.

Entitlement!

I'm talking about the danger of putting your marriage into a situation where you take on the belief that your spouse can NEVER choose divorce because they have no choice. Do you believe that? Do you believe that you have a marital situation where you or your spouse has No Choice except to remain in the marriage? I just want to warn you how that false belief could be used by the enemy of God and all who bear His image, which includes everyone He's created, you and me too, to destroy the marriage.

A belief like that can lull a person into a false sense of security. It could have one or the other in the marriage believe that they don't have to put any effort into being in a relationship at all, that they could just take full advantage of the other's loyalties. It could also tempt a person to believe that all that God and life have for them is only suffering until death alone parts one or the other.

I read a long time ago how one of the Christian authors I admire the most had a wife who actually was relieved after his death because she could finally enjoy life! What a hard thing to read about someone I admired so much. This also encouraged me to work on my own marriage even more. That was not a testimony I wanted to have about my wife or marriage. "Here's so and so, who was a great minister, who God used mightily.... whose wife and family finally found joy, peace and life after they were no longer under that weight...." Yuck!

I'm not proud of getting a divorce. It is not something I wanted to choose ever, but there are worse things than divorce.

Why would I write a chapter like this in a book like this? Because if you find yourself being lulled by a false sense of security and do not

think that marriage takes two people working towards a common goal of a life in communion with each other, then beware. You may also think and believe that only one person has got to work on the marriage. Even more dangerous, you may think that person who needs to work on things does not include yourself. It's at that point of contention where the enemy will strike and take hold and crush what's left. If you don't want things to improve in your marriage, just stop taking any action to allow yourself to grow or to encourage your spouse to do the same.

One of the biggest dangers about entitlement is that whoever is feeling entitled may actually be abusing their spouse in some way or another and not even realizing it. Think about it, if you ever hear anyone in a marriage saying things like, "You have to do this or that, or allow me to do this or that.... Because we're married." If you hear or think such things, then I encourage you to have some conversations with your spouse. If you cannot talk to them about those beliefs because of fear, then maybe consider getting help of some kind. Relationship studies, counseling, Bible studies that stir healthy discussion, something.

What is bad about talking about any of these things? I know there are people who think that even speaking words like this out loud gives the words power. Jesus said many things in truth and in love and never lost authority or power to resist sin and do what is right. Exposing darkness and false beliefs in love can bring freedom and salvation. Even for marriages! Just because you think your spouse is acting entitled because you see it and hear it in their actions and words does not mean that they know they have fallen into it. If you say something, then things can change for the better. Say something. If you cannot say anything, then prayerfully re-read the previous paragraph.

One fear I know people have about talking about divorce is they worry that even the conversation may give their spouse reason to consider it as an option. If that were to happen, they already were considering it.

Would it be a bad thing if each person in a marriage thought that they needed to put effort into loving each other? I can say for certain that a marriage to someone who doesn't believe they need to actually love in action and words is missing something important.

Divorce is not something I wish for anyone, but as I state in another place in this book, there are certainly times and situations that warrant it.

# Chapter Thirteen

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## Is Divorce a Sin? Are Divorcees Able to Enter the Kingdom of God?

**C**onsider the simplified answers to these questions (to view questions with some answers, see Appendix C, First Questions):

Is Divorce a sin? NO!

Could the decision to get a divorce be a result or consequence of sin of either party involved? Yes!

Are there choices made after divorce that may be sin for either party involved? Yes!

Can someone who's been divorced enter the Kingdom of God?  
YES!

How can anyone who's been divorced enter the Kingdom of God? Does the Bible say they'll be outside the gates of heaven? A much more important question I think to ask is, "Who are NOT Outside the Gates and WHY?"

Do you know someone who holds divorce over anyone else in such a way that suggests they are treating divorce as if it were the unpardonable sin? I will never make light of divorce, but I hope to never make too heavy of it either. Be careful not to take a place as judge and impart punishment in a place we are commanded to love! There is a judge in heaven, only one. The same person who tells us here on earth to love one another. To be clear, marriage is serious, and the dissolution of any marriage is serious too.

Before really digging into this more, let's read some scriptures and consider God's heart on all of this. Really, God's heart on this? YES. Heart on what? His heart regarding His children.

More Questions (to view questions with some answers, see Appendix C, Second Questions):

Please answer these questions before looking at some answers in the Appendix.

Who are God's true children and how did they become His children?

Who are Jesus' brothers and sisters?

What did you or anyone else do to become a child of God?

Who deserves to be a child of God?

What can earn or pay for entry into God's family?

Do you still ever sin? (If "no", then cautiously read 1Jn 1:8)

I hope you see the obvious void, do you?

One goal of this book is to encourage divorcees to draw near to God. Another goal is to shine a light into an area of hurt and lack of love some members and leaders within the body of Christ show towards

members dealing with divorce based more on fear rather than truth in love. The truth is that people get divorced for reasons beyond one spouse having committed adultery.

What are reasons for divorce you've heard of? If divorce itself is not sin, then why is it treated like it's not only a sin, but also one of the most awful ones?

# Chapter Fourteen

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## Why is Divorce Treated Like an Unpardonable Sin

**W**hat is a family, (here I speak specifically regarding married couples.)? It is the special relationship created when two marry and become one. Children are welcomed members into a family, but it is the married couple that are the existing family members first.

I don't think that many things have a greater impact on the world for good than good families, and divorce brings an end to a family unit. Can good still come? Thankfully, yes. But at what costs? At what losses?

Divorce is something that can affect many lives and each one for a lifetime, not just a short amount of time. The husband and wife, the children, anything that the husband and wife had created together inside and outside of the marriage. Business, friendships, contractual agreements, joint ventures, ministries, careers, dreams, goals, plans, hopes, possible futures, and I'm sure this list can go much further.

What about the impact on the children and their beliefs and dreams and friends and relationships and the list above and so on?

When a marriage is dissolved, everything dependent on it is affected somehow, and you cannot always know how because we are limited in our understanding and only human.

Am I saying you ought to never be, or get, or consider divorce? No, I'm saying that if you ever do, then please be very real about what is at stake and the possible consequences. Are all the consequences of divorce bad? It really depends on the reason behind the divorce. What if the divorce was based on the decision to live vs dying, or get away from an abusive unhealthy relationship, or from someone who ultimately is taking advantage of a broken version of yourself whom you no longer want to be?

To make it as plain as possible, I understand that if a person is trying to decide that they must get a divorce because the only other options are not living or remaining in an abusive life, then divorce may be the only option. Who defines what it means to not live, or what abuse is, or what God has called you to remain in or not, or how long? You have to seek and gain those insights for your own self. In truth, no one can or will live your life for you.

If it's so detrimental, then why do many ministers agree that if there is adultery or abuse, then divorce may be the only way of surviving and having hope of any life beyond it? I have to agree. Although I understand many people may quote and only think "God hates divorce", (I did in the past), however, there are occasions where the Bible warrants it, and also there is provision still for forgiveness, grace, and mercy too. Thank God for His loving-kindness!

I was concerned that someone may read this book and think it may be a way to gain permission to take divorce lightly and end a marriage,

but that would only be possible if a person does not actually read the book.

After a great deal of prayerful consideration, I felt led to write this book for all of us who have been divorced and need help in getting back on track with God and His plan for our lives! It is only by the grace of God that I can go onward in to the Life More Abundant, which Jesus says anyone who follows Him can have. In truth, it's only by His grace that anyone does.

At some point, after having been divorced, it is understandable that there may be a need to grieve losses, hopes, and dreams. I encourage we must also make a choice to take action and draw near to God and allow Him to draw near to us so we can heal and grow on. No matter if you made the choice to get a divorce or if someone divorced you, there may be losses to be grieved. There will be forgiveness that needs to be given and possibly received, too. For myself, I was at a crossroad in many ways.

I had a testimony of how God had miraculously intervened and saved this marriage in the past. I had been a part of leadership in ministry. We had children whose lives could be affected in unknown ways, (and in my opinion had already been affected for years in many ways which I hadn't understood, I'm saddened to say). How about financial things? How about friends and other people who only knew me from years of being with my spouse, who was now my ex?

Why is this important? Because there is nothing about divorce that I take lightly, and I take marriage very seriously. I also realize that I found myself in an unhealthy marriage and decided after many years of doing all that I could to save it, that it needed to end. So, I finally chose divorce.

To say it plainly and straight out, I "felt" that to choose to get a divorce was choosing to sin (consider Ro. 14:23). That doesn't make

it the “unpardonable sin”, which, thank God it is not. The one mentioned by Jesus in Mt 12:30-32. This is not to justify anything, rather it is to be honest that I made a decision based on what I thought my options were personally, which is what every person must do.

Am I saying that you can be forgiven for getting a divorce, or for remarrying after someone gave you a divorce, outside of the exceptions mentioned elsewhere in this book? YES. Why all caps? Because there is a stigma around divorce that makes many divorcees feel as if they are seen as a bad, bad, bad person. OK, at least in some circles and groups.

Seeing that typed out still doesn't give it the “ick” factor I think and feel like it has, which I've also heard others share they felt in churches as well.

Divorce changed my life in many, many ways. Do I regret having made the decision to divorce? With a circumspect view of all I'd done in all the years trying to save the marriage, I cannot say I regret making a decision to survive once I realized the impossibility of anything else.

In looking back, I can, at best and only in part, see and understand how God uses the good and the bad in our lives. For example, if I'd understood the impact my unhealthy marital relationship was having on our children sooner, then I probably would have made more drastic decisions sooner. Even though I know God uses the good and bad in all our lives, including our children's lives, to mold and shape us, that does not mean I'd leave my children in a bad place intentionally. I hope that one day the children can get to know the God who saved me in the war and how great His love is for each of them. Or that they'd get to know the God who'd done so many great and amazing things for us all.

We parents all have good and bad. I've never seen the children as people who I've owned, rather I think God is clear that they are gifts from God himself. He makes each of us with His purposes and plans

for lives only best lived with Him as Savior, Lord, and God. We all must choose Him for ourselves and in our own time, too. If marriage is the best image we can be given of the relationship of Christ Jesus and His church, then I sadly know that at least in part what our children got was a damaged image I didn't realize I was perpetuating. I know God still loves them, and all of us imperfect parents. My dislike of the pains caused is no less. Thank God for His loving-kindness for all of us.

In the next chapter, I'll share in more detail the ramifications of my choices as they were shared during my interview / ministry time with my friend Richard. I said choices because the divorce was the beginning of other choices that also had to be made, or not. Choices that affected more than just my life.

At this point, it would be easy to stop with theology alone.

To settle the question of sin, forgiveness, and standing with God, and leave it there.

But knowing something is true and living as if it is true are not the same thing.

The next part of this story is not about doctrine. It is about what happens after you believe God forgives you... but you are still unsure how to move forward.

# Chapter Fifteen

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## Receiving Forgiveness Is Harder Than Believing In It

**F**orgiveness answered my questions about God.  
It did not answer my questions about myself.

There is a difference between believing God forgives and allowing yourself to receive that forgiveness.

I believed God forgave divorcees. I believed God forgave people who made painful, complicated decisions. I even taught about forgiveness for years. But when it came to me, something was different.

I believed God forgave me, and then I quietly disqualified myself anyway.

I did not argue with Scripture. I did not question God's mercy. I questioned whether I was still allowed to move forward. Somewhere

inside, I decided forgiveness meant God was no longer angry, but it did not mean I was permitted to re-engage life, calling, or purpose.

So I hid.

I stepped back from church, from ministry, from friendships that reminded me of who I had been before. Not because God told me to, but because I was afraid of rejection and afraid of being exposed as someone who no longer qualified.

Looking back, I can see this clearly now. I did not doubt God's forgiveness. I doubted whether I was still usable.

If you are reading this and feel stalled, hesitant, or unsure how to move forward with God, you may not be resisting forgiveness at all. You may be resisting permission. And permission is often the last thing we give ourselves.

# Chapter Sixteen

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## What Forgiveness Changed and What It Did Not

**F**orgiveness changed my relationship with God. It did not instantly clarify my future.

Forgiveness restored intimacy. It did not immediately restore confidence. Forgiveness removed condemnation. It did not remove grief, consequences, or unanswered questions.

This matters because many people stop trusting God again when forgiveness does not do what they expected it to do.

I expected forgiveness to feel like a green light. Instead, it felt like quiet. Not rejection. Just stillness. A side of shalom, peace, trust.

I was not being pushed forward, and I was not being pushed away. That is when I learned something important. Forgiveness was being used to restore relationship, not roles. Especially relationship with Heavenly Father that I was limiting, not Him.

God did not rush me back into leadership. He did not explain the timeline. He did not hand me a platform. What He did do was stay close. I knew I was in His hand and I was beginning to learn another side of His presence.

Sometimes closeness without clarity is harder than being given instructions.

If you are waiting for God to clearly explain what comes next and He has not yet, that does not mean you missed your chance. It may mean He is rebuilding trust before direction.

# Chapter Seventeen

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## Ministry After Disqualification

I did not return to ministry because I felt ready. I returned because God kept inviting.

At first, the invitations were small and uncomfortable. Easy to ignore. A conversation here. A moment of prayer there. An opportunity to help quietly, without a title.

Each time, the same question surfaced. God, are You sure You still want to use me?

And each time, the invitation came anyway. Not with pressure. Not with correction. Just opportunity.

These moments did not erase my past. They did not validate my decisions. They revealed something steady and humbling. God was not done.

Not because I deserved it. Not because I explained myself well. But because His call had never been based on my perfection.

I share these moments not to prove anything, but to show something important. God does not wait for you to feel qualified before He invites you to obey.

If you are waiting to feel ready again, you may be waiting longer than God ever intended. That does not mean you have to rush either, keep reading.

# Chapter Eighteen

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## Relearning Trust

One of the surprises after divorce was how God rebuilt me using tools I did not expect.

Not sermons. Not positions. Not instant clarity.

Instead, coaching. Learning. Listening.

The Life Coach School and related work were not replacements for faith. They were instruments God used to restore agency. They helped me recognize patterns, assumptions, and beliefs I had carried for years without questioning.

I learned how often I judged myself. How quickly I assumed disqualification. How deeply I believed I needed permission from others to move forward.

God was not threatened by this process. He used it.

For those who have been hurt or ostracized by churches, this matters. God is not limited to church spaces to heal His children. He is not offended when healing comes through unexpected doors.

Trust is not rebuilt by declarations. It is rebuilt through experience. Through small steps. Through honest reflection. Through learning to listen again, or even learning to listen for the first time.

# Chapter Nineteen

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## Recommissioned, Not Reset

**G**od did not reset my life after divorce. He redeployed it. He did not ask me to pretend the divorce never happened. He asked me to let Him use who I became because of it.

That distinction matters.

A reset ignores reality. Redeployment honors growth.

My calling did not disappear. It matured. It became quieter, more discerning, less performative, and more real.

If you have been divorced, you are not starting over as a spiritual failure. You are continuing forward as a human being shaped by loss, humility, and hard truth.

God's plan for your life may not look like what you imagined before, but it can still be fully His.

And it still requires courage. The courage to trust again. The courage to obey small invitations. The courage to believe your story is not over.

See, by the time God began inviting me forward again,  
I no longer needed answers about the past.  
I needed courage for what came next.

# Chapter Twenty

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## A Life Still Given Back to God

**T**here comes a moment after loss when you realize healing alone is not the goal. Healing is preparation.

After my divorce, I spent a long time asking God why. Eventually, the question shifted. Not because I had answers, but because God was asking something else.

Are you willing to give your life back to Me again, not the version you planned, but the one you have now?

That was the real crossroads.

When I first gave my life to God, I gave Him hope, energy, and dreams. This time, I gave Him experience, loss, humility, and fear.

I did not know what obedience would look like next. I did not know where I fit. What I knew was this. God was still God, and I was still His.

If you are waiting for confidence before you obey, you may be waiting too long. Confidence often follows obedience, not the other way around.

Moving forward with God after divorce does not mean pretending it did not hurt, minimizing what was lost, or rushing back into roles. It may mean learning to listen again, letting yourself be seen slowly, rebuilding trust carefully, and obeying quietly.

This book was not written to give permission to divorce. It was written to give permission to live again with God.

Divorce is not the end of your usefulness. It is not the end of your calling. It is not the end of God's patience with you.

If you are willing to walk with Him honestly and humbly, He will walk with you.

That has always been the promise.

# Chapter Twenty-One

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## Walking Forward Without Shame

**T**here is a quiet fear many people carry after divorce.

It is not the fear of failure.

It is the fear of being permanently behind.

Behind spiritually.

Behind relationally.

Behind what God might have wanted to do.

I lived with that fear longer than I realized.

I did not feel angry at God.

I felt unsure how to walk with Him without constantly looking over my shoulder.

But something became clear over time.

God was never asking me to relive the past.

He was asking me to live present and honest before Him.

Walking forward without shame does not mean forgetting.  
It means refusing to let the past become your identity.

You are not your divorce.

You are not disqualified because something ended.

You are still a person God knows by name.

Walking forward does not require certainty.

It requires willingness.

Willingness to pray even when words are hard.

Willingness to listen even when clarity is slow.

Willingness to obey even when confidence has not caught up yet.

God does not ask you to prove anything to Him.

He invites you to walk.

If your life feels quieter now, that does not mean it is smaller.

If your calling feels different, that does not mean it is gone.

If your faith feels humbler, that does not mean it is weaker.

Often it means it is more real.

God still writes stories with people who have been divorced.

Not despite their story, but through it.

And He is not finished with you.

# Chapter Twenty-Two

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## A Prayer for the Reader

If you are willing,  
you might pray something like this, not because it's perfect,  
but because it's real:

“Lord,

I don't know exactly what comes next.

I don't fully trust myself yet.

And I don't always trust how others will see me.

But I am willing to walk with You again.

I give You my life as it is now,  
not as I wish it had been.

Show me what You want me to see.

Lead me where You want me to go.

And help me obey You one step at a time with Your clarity and  
confirmation.

In Jesus' name, amen.”

You don't need to feel strong to pray that.

You only need to be willing, even if you may need to begin with asking the Lord to help you become willing.

# Chapter Twenty-Three

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## The Restoration Path (A Simple Way Forward)

**T**his book was not written to give permission to divorce.  
It was written to be encouraging and give permission to live  
again with God after a divorce.

I hope this book can also be used to encourage some people to at  
least begin taking steps in having more real and healthy relationships  
than they have been. I hope some people are rescued from the trap of  
entitlement. I hope some are rescued from the place of using divorce  
as a way to judge and condemn themselves or others.

Divorce is not the end of your usefulness.  
It is not the end of your calling.  
It is not the end of God's patience with you.

It may be the end of a chapter that God never intended to define the rest of your life.

God still has a plan for you.

Not because everything went right.

But because He is still faithful.

If you are willing to walk with Him  
honestly, humbly, and openly,  
He will walk with you.

In the first part of James 4:8 (NHEB) the Bible says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. "

Where are you at in your relationship with God? With His help I really do believe all things are possible.

This includes moving into life, with God in it, after divorce. It also could include so much more!

Finally getting help with beliefs in your life that have damaged your relationships, with God, family and friends.

My hope is that after reading this book you may be encouraged to draw closer to God. I hope that with His help, love, grace, and mercy you'll take another step into the life He's calling you to have with Him. A step toward more healing and wholeness in every area of your life.

Heavenly Father, I pray for the reader of this book You've encouraged me to write. I pray for life, peace, hope, patience, forgiveness, mercy and grace for them. That they can receive these things from you and from themselves. That they can experience more of You and Your help, and Your presence. I pray that they can begin to see and understand whatever the next step is for them to take in their relationship with You and the people in their life. I pray for healing, for courage and strength for them. I also pray for divine appointments for them too.

In Jesus' name, amen.

# Chapter Twenty-Four

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## Next Steps (Start Here)

**1 ) Get the free companion resources**  
<https://www.CanGodUseMe.com/really/bonus>  
(Reflection guide + next steps)

**2) Leave an honest review on Amazon**  
Even 2–3 sentences helps other hurting people find hope.  
Search: *Divorced – Can God Use Me?* by Victor Aramanda

**3) Share it with one person**  
If you know someone who feels disqualified after divorce, send them the title of this book or the website.

One step at a time.

# Chapter Twenty-Five

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## Additional Help (Optional)

**S**ometimes the next step after divorce requires support beyond a book.

I keep an updated list of resources here:

<https://www.CanGodUseMe.com/really/help>

# Chapter Twenty-Six

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## Disclaimer

**T**his book is for spiritual encouragement and personal reflection.

It is not a substitute for professional medical, legal, or mental health advice.

If you are in danger or experiencing abuse, seek immediate help from local emergency services or qualified professionals.

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# Appendix A

## **S**pecial mentions in this book:

OperationLightForce.com , Richard Mull  
“The God Speaks Bible”, by Richard Mull  
“The Jesus Training Manual”, by Richard Mull  
TheLifeCoachSchool.com , Brooke Castille  
God used her live conference to encourage me back to Himself.  
DisciplersInternational.com , Bart Physioc  
One of my special Chaplains during the 1st Gulf War.  
Brother in Christ, Friend and mentor.  
Clarify Your Calling, and Podcast Pro University, Stefanie Gass

## **More helpful information Regarding Life-Saving Divorces:**

27 Myths about divorce

<https://lifesavingdivorce.com/myths-of-divorce/>

Church/Denomination Divorce Policy Comparison Chart  
(More than 40 Christian Denominations)

<https://lifesavingdivorce.com/comparison/>

Divorcing an Abusive Spouse Is Not a Sin

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/march-web-only/russell-moore-divorce-marriage-domestic-violence-abuse.html>

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# Appendix B

## **M**arriage, Divorce, Re-Marriage from Christian and Jewish perspectives:

### **Christianity**

In Christianity, teachings on marriage, divorce, and remarriage are based on the Bible, with interpretations that can vary significantly among different denominations. However, I'll try to offer a general overview with reference to key biblical passages.

### **Marriage**

Christianity views marriage as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman, intended to be a lifelong union. This concept is rooted in Genesis 2:24, which states, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Marriage is considered a symbol of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:25-33), emphasizing love, mutual respect, and commitment.

### **Divorce**

Divorce is generally discouraged in Christianity, reflecting Jesus' teachings on the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage. In the Gospel of Matthew 19:3-9, Jesus cites the original intention for marriage as a lifelong bond and allows for divorce only in the case of marital unfaithfulness, interpreted by many as adultery. The Apostle Paul

also addresses divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-15, advising couples to stay together but acknowledging circumstances where divorce may be permissible, such as in cases of abandonment by an unbelieving partner.

### **Remarriage**

Views on remarriage after divorce vary widely among Christian denominations. Some interpret Jesus' teachings to mean that remarriage is only allowed if the divorce was due to adultery (Matthew 19:9). Others, looking at the broader context of grace and forgiveness in Christian teaching, may allow for remarriage in several circumstances, emphasizing repentance, forgiveness, and the importance of living a life that reflects Christian values going forward.

### **References**

- **Genesis 2:24** is foundational for the Christian understanding of marriage as a divine institution.
- **Matthew 19:3-9** records Jesus' explicit teachings on marriage and divorce, emphasizing the permanence of marriage except in cases of unfaithfulness.
- **Ephesians 5:25-33** describes the relationship between husbands and wives as reflecting the relationship between Christ and the Church, underscoring the depth of commitment expected in marriage.
- **1 Corinthians 7:10-15** provides guidance from Paul on marriage, including circumstances under which divorce may be permissible.

It's important to note that interpretations of these teachings can differ greatly among various Christian communities, with some

adopting a more stringent view and others a more permissive stance on issues of divorce and remarriage. To fully understand the stance of a particular denomination, it would be necessary to consult its specific teachings and leaders.

### **Judaism**

In Judaism, the laws governing marriage, divorce, and remarriage are derived from the Torah, specifically from the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and other rabbinic interpretations found in the Talmud. These laws are complex, but I'll explain them in simple terms.

### **Marriage**

Jewish marriage is known as "Kiddushin," which translates to sanctification or dedication. The process involves a formal agreement (Ketubah) that outlines the responsibilities of the husband towards his wife, a marriage contract. The marriage is formalized through the giving of a ring or another object of value from the groom to the bride, with the declaration, "Behold, you are betrothed unto me with this ring, according to the law of Moses and Israel." This act symbolizes the groom's commitment and the creation of a sacred bond. The marriage is consummated with a festive meal and blessings (Sheva Brachot).

### **Remarriage**

After a divorce is finalized through the Get and putting away (separation), both the man and the woman are free to remarry. However, there are some restrictions. For example, a Kohen (descendant of Aaron, the brother of Moses, and part of the priestly class) cannot marry a divorcee. The Torah also prohibits a woman from returning to her first husband if she married another man after her first divorce (Deuteronomy 24:4).

The laws regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage aim to ensure the sanctity of the marriage bond and the welfare of both par-

ties. However, interpretations and applications of these laws can vary widely among different Jewish communities.

### **References**

- Genesis 2:24 discusses the fundamental concept of marriage as a man leaving his parents to unite with his wife.
- Exodus 21:10-11 outlines the obligations of a husband towards his wife.
- Leviticus 21:7,14 details the restrictions on marriages for Kohanim, (Priests).
- Deuteronomy 24:1-4 provides the basic laws of divorce and remarriage.

For a deeper understanding, studying these texts within their original context and with the commentary of rabbinic scholars is essential, as they provide detailed explanations and interpretations that guide Jewish life and practice.

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# Appendix C

**F**irst set of questions:

## 1. Is Divorce a Sin or Not?

**Scripture Reference:** Matthew 19:3-9, where Jesus discusses the nature of marriage and divorce. He says, "What God has joined together, let no one separate," but also acknowledges Moses' allowance for divorce due to the hardness of human hearts, while emphasizing that from the beginning, it was not so.

**Explanation:** This passage suggests that divorce was not part of God's original design for marriage. Jesus indicates that divorce results from human sinfulness and is a concession to human weakness, rather than a part of God's perfect will. However, He also specifies an exception related to marital unfaithfulness.

## 2. Could the Decision to Get a Divorce Be a Result or Consequence of Sin?

**Scripture Reference:** James 4:1-2 discusses conflicts and disputes arising from desires that battle within individuals, which can be applied broadly to the kinds of conflicts that might lead to divorce.

**Explanation:** While this scripture does not address divorce directly, it highlights how sin and selfish desires can lead to conflicts and, by extension, could contribute to the breakdown of a marriage. Thus,

divorce could be seen as a consequence of sin, not necessarily the act of divorce itself but the actions and heart conditions that lead to it.

### **3. Are There Choices Made After Divorce That May Be Sin?**

**Scripture Reference:** Matthew 5:32 discusses remarriage after divorce in the context of adultery, implying that actions taken after divorce, including remarriage under certain conditions, can be considered sinful.

**Explanation:** This suggests that it is not just the act of divorce but also decisions made afterward, like remarriage in certain contexts, that can be seen as sinful. The focus is on the heart and motivations, as well as the adherence to God's commands regarding marriage.

### **4. Can Someone Who's Been Divorced Enter into the Kingdom of God?**

**Scripture Reference:** 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 lists various behaviors that are inconsistent with inheriting the kingdom of God but then states, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

**Explanation:** This passage makes it clear that regardless of one's past actions, including any sin associated with divorce, transformation is possible through Jesus Christ. It emphasizes that through faith in Christ, individuals are cleansed, made holy, and justified—able to enter the kingdom of God. This underscores the Christian belief in redemption and the power of God's grace to overcome all sins, offering hope and a new start to anyone, including those who have experienced divorce.

### **Second set of questions:**

### **1. Who are God's true children and how did they become His children?**

Scripture Reference: John 1:12-13 states, "But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

Explanation: God's true children are those who have received Jesus Christ by believing in His name. This spiritual rebirth makes them children of God, not by natural descent or human decision, but by God's will.

### **2. Who are they who are Jesus' brothers and sisters?**

Scripture Reference: Matthew 12:50 says, "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Explanation: Jesus defines His brothers and sisters as those who do the will of His Father in Heaven. This spiritual kinship transcends biological ties, emphasizing obedience and faithfulness to God's will as the criteria for being considered part of Jesus' family.

### **3. What did you or anyone else do to become a child of God?**

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 2:8-9 declares, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Explanation: Becoming a child of God is not something anyone can achieve by their own actions or merit. It is a gift from God, received through faith in Jesus Christ. It's by God's grace, not by works, to ensure that it is accessible to all, irrespective of personal achievements or status.

### **4. Who deserves to be a child of God?**

Scripture Reference: Romans 3:23-24 tells us, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Explanation: According to the Bible, no one deserves to be a child of God based on their own merits, because all have sinned. However, through Jesus' sacrifice, everyone has the opportunity to be justified and made right with God as a gift of His grace.

### **5. What can earn or pay for entry into God's family?**

Scripture Reference: Titus 3:5-7 explains, "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Explanation: Entry into God's family cannot be earned or paid for by any human effort or righteousness. It's entirely a result of God's mercy, the cleansing and renewal brought by the Holy Spirit, and the grace provided through Jesus Christ.

### **6. Do you still sin after having become a child of God?**

**Scripture Reference:** 1 John 1:8-10 tells us, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

**Explanation:** According to this passage, even after becoming children of God, Christians acknowledge that they still sin. The key distinction is not the absence of sin, but the presence of a relationship with God through which forgiveness and cleansing are continually available. The act of confession and repentance is essential for maintaining this relationship, acknowledging God's faithfulness and justice in forgiving sins.

This scripture underscores the Christian belief in the ongoing need for grace and forgiveness, even after one has entered into a relationship

with God through faith in Jesus Christ. It emphasizes the reality of human imperfection and the continual reliance on God's mercy and forgiveness.

### **Understanding a possible "Void" you may have in Expressing Jesus' Love**

**Revised Question:** I hope you see the obvious void that exists in your expression of Jesus' love towards your brother or sister in Christ if you do not have forgiveness, mercy, or grace towards a divorcee, do you?

**Scripture Reference:** Colossians 3:12-14 offers guidance here: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

**Explanation:** This scripture encourages Christians to embody the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and above all, love—attributes that are foundational to the Christian faith. In the context of dealing with a divorcee or anyone who has experienced failure or sin, the call to forgiveness, mercy, and grace is clear. The "void" refers to the gap that exists when professing Christians fail to extend these virtues towards others, particularly those who have gone through divorce.

The Bible emphasizes that as believers, the way we love and forgive others should mirror the love, forgiveness, and grace that God extends to us. This includes showing mercy and grace to all, regardless of their past mistakes or circumstances. The absence of forgiveness and grace towards a brother or sister in Christ, such as a divorcee, reveals a lack of understanding and living out the fullness of Jesus' love. Jesus' love

is unconditional and inclusive, and His followers are called to express this love towards others, creating a community where forgiveness and grace abound.

The "void" in this context underscores a crucial aspect of Christian discipleship: the need to reflect Jesus' character in our relationships. Failing to extend forgiveness, mercy, or grace to anyone, including divorcees, not only contradicts the nature of Jesus' love but also misses an opportunity to embody the transformative power of that love in the lives of others and within the Christian community.

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# Appendix D

Malachi 2:16 – Hasn't the Bible *Always* Said, "God Hates Divorce"? No!

ANCIENT, EARLY and MODERN TRANSLATIONS	Who does the hating?	What does he hate?	Text
Septuagint LXX 3 <sup>rd</sup> -1 <sup>st</sup> Century BC (Brenton)	The husband	his wife	But if thou shouldst hate thy wife and put her away, saith the Lord God of Israel,
Septuagint (LXX) 3 <sup>rd</sup> -1 <sup>st</sup> Century BC	The husband	his wife	But if having hated you divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel,
Qumran 4QXII <sup>a</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century BC	The husband	his wife	"For if you have hated (and) divorced," [says the LORD] God of Israel,
Aramaic (AD 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century)	The husband	his wife	But if you hate her, divorce her, says the LORD God of Israel,
Latin Vulgate AD 382	The husband	his wife	"When you have hate, divorce!
Masoretic Text (AD 10 <sup>th</sup> Century)	The husband	his wife	For the man who hates and divorces, says the LORD, the God of Israel,
Wycliffe Bible 1395	The husband	his wife	when thou hatest her, leave thou her, saith the Lord God of Israel.
Coverdale Bible 1535	The husband	his wife	Yf thou hatest her, put her away, sayeth the LORDE God of Israel
Matthew Bible 1537	The husband	his wife	Yf thou hatest her put her away sayeth the Lorde God of Israel
Great Bible 1539	The husband	his wife	Yf thou hatest her put her away sayeth the Lorde God of Israel
Luther Bible 1545	The husband	his wife	Indeed, he who bears her ill will and repudiates her,...
Bishop's Bible 1568	The husband	his wife	If thou hatest her, put her away, saith the lorde God of Israel:
Geneva Bible 1587	The husband	his wife	If thou hatest her, put her away, sayeth the Lorde God of Israel,
Douay-Rheims 1582	The husband	his wife	When thou shalt hate her put her away.
King James Bible 1611	God	divorce	For the LORD, the God of Isreal, saith that he hateth putting away
Young's Literal Translation 1862	God (I)	divorce	For [I] hate sending away, said Jehovah, God of Israel,
English Revised Version 1881	God (I)	divorce	For I hate putting away, saith the LORD, the God of Israel,
American Standard Version 1901	God (I)	divorce	For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,
Revised Standard Version 1973	God (I)	divorce	"For I hate divorce, says the LORD the God of Israel,
New International Version 1984 (later updated 2011)	God (I)	divorce	"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel,...
New American Standard Bible 1989	God (I)	divorce	"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel,
New Revised Standard Version 1989	God (I)	divorce	For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel,
New Living Translation 1996	God (I)	divorce	"For I hate divorce!" says the Lord, the God of Israel.
Christian Standard Bible 2003	The husband	his wife	"If he hates and divorces [his wife]," says the Lord God of Israel,
New International Version 2011 update	The husband	his wife	"The man who hates and divorces his wife," says the Lord, the God of Israel
English Standard Version 2011	The husband	His wife	"For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord, the God of Israel,

Table based on articles by Dr. C. Jack Collins (Malachi 2:16 Again) and Kyle Pope MA ("God Hates" or "I Hate")

*21 Bible translations of Malachi 2:16. Table based in part on the work of Dr. C. Jack Collins "Malachi 2:16 Again" and Kyle Pope "'He Hates' or 'God Hates.'"*

Several Good Resources on this subject:

<https://lifesavingdivorce.com/malachi/>

<https://margmowczko.com/divorce-malachi-2/>

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# Appendix E

This book is not an argument for divorce.  
It is a guide for **shepherding people after it.**

## **Key Insights:**

Divorce often produces **self-judgment before church judgment**

Many divorcees withdraw **before** they are rejected

Forgiveness is often believed but not *received*

Calling does not disappear – it matures

## **What Helps:**

Invitation without pressure

Listening without fixing

Grace without endorsement

Presence without timelines

## **What Harms:**

Rushed restoration

Silence around grief

Implied permanent disqualification

Treating divorce as identity

Shepherds do not need to resolve divorce theology to walk with wounded sheep.

They need patience, truth, and love.